

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
PRAIRIE HILLS PLAZA
April 21-22, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Russ Cusack, Tim Davenport, Kirsten Dvorak, Rod Gillund, Vickay Gross, Joseph Hall, Deborah Jendro, Marshall Longie, Darren Moos, Darcy Severson, Sherry Shirek

Members Absent

Harley Engelman, Kevin McDonough, Sheri Wilson

Chairperson Vickay Gross called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Agenda

Action: A motion was made by Rod Gillund and seconded by Kirsten Dvorak to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of January 8, 2016 Minutes

Action: A motion was made by Tim Davenport and seconded by Darcy Severson to accept the SRC quarterly minutes from its last meeting on January 8, 2016. Motion carried.

Expanded Supported Employment Project – Cheryl Anderson and Michelle Burney

Cheryl Anderson and Michelle Burney presented an update on the Expanded Supported Employment Project. The focus of this three year project is to assist individuals in transition out of day support programs and sheltered workshops and into competitive employment. To be eligible for the program, the individuals must be eligible for developmental disability services and vocational rehabilitation services and will require ongoing job support. The providers involved with this project are Pride, Community Living Services (CLS), Kalix, and HIT. Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) is providing training for all individuals involved with the project. Training includes two on-site visits each year, two webinars per year, and 20 hours of technical assistance per month. Most individuals involved with the project at this time are working with clients on the discovery process which is an in-depth process where the providers are learning about the individuals. The discovery process can take up to 20 hours. Individuals and families involved in this process have reported being appreciative of someone taking the time to get to know the individuals on a personal basis.

Public Meeting Requirements Update – Rebecca Haas

Rebecca Haas provided an update on public meeting requirements. All regularly scheduled meetings and special committee meetings must be publicly posted and

minutes must be made available to the public. Meetings can be held via phone conference, e-mail communication, or texting. A committee can include any authority of two or more people. Members of the public must be notified of meetings at the same time as committee members. Members of the public are able to attend public meetings, but do not have the right to speak at an open meeting. Minutes must include names of members in attendance, the date and time the meeting was called to order and adjourned, a list of topics discussed regarding public business, a description of each motion made at the meeting and whether the motion was seconded, the results of every vote taken at the meeting, and the vote of each member on every recorded roll call vote.

Transition Updates – Patty Wanner

Under the federal regulations with WIOA, DVR is required to spend 15% of the federal allotment on pre-employment transition services for individuals who are between the ages of 14 and 21 and enrolled in secondary education. The individuals can be eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services. The five key areas identified as pre-employment transition services are job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counselling regarding the transition to postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy training.

Patty Wanner is monitoring DVR expenses in order to comply with the WIOA funding regulations and states that DVR expects to meet the 15% requirement. DVR has several contracts with school systems, IPAT, and Pathfinder Services to assist in providing pre-employment transition services. DVR is also involved with the National Technical Transition Center's five year grant which is providing training to 5 states. The partners involved in ND include DPI, school districts, special education districts, students with disabilities, job coaches, behavioral health professionals, parents, and employers.

Transition Success Stories – Kyle Peterson and Samantha Gores

Kyle Peterson, DVR counselor in Minot, and Samantha Gores, RSI job coach in Minot, discussed the transition services they are providing through a contract with Minot Public Schools. Samantha has started working with students as young as 14 and provides pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students as well as students who have been determined eligible for DVR. Samantha provides a monthly written report to Kyle for all students she is working with. Once the students have been determined eligible for DVR, Kyle builds upon the services that have been provided by Samantha and further explores client's vocational goals and begins the planning process with the student. Both Samantha and Kyle have a strong presence at the local schools and they report that students are more comfortable working with them as they have become familiar faces. Kyle and Samantha are also excited about starting a Junior Optimist Club in Minot. This club will be open to any youth who wants to be involved with the community and participate in volunteer activities.

Budget Report – Russ Cusack

Russ Cusack provided an update on the DVR budget. Based on past spending practices and future forecasting, DVR is on track to spend the 15% requirement for pre-

employment transition services. DVR is on track to spend the federal award and state match. About 60% of the DVR budget is spent on services in the field as required for clients. The Division is awaiting further instruction related to the 2017-19 biennium budget.

Appeals Summary – Russ Cusack

Russ Cusack stated there was one request for mediation in the past year. DVR denied the request and the client did not pursue a formal appeal. There were no other appeals.

Region II Update – Peter Yung, Regional Administrator from Minot

Peter Yung provided a report for the Minot regional office. His counselors have been actively involved in working with transition students. They have about 70 students interested in the summer work program. One counselor is involved with the expanded SEP project. The Minot office is involved with a one year technical assistance program with a goal of developing policies and guidelines for connecting with businesses and learning how to use labor market research more effectively. This program will end in September 2016. The vision rehabilitation specialist is working on obtaining her certification and expects to complete this process in October 2016. Minot is on track for meeting their goals, and they have surpassed their goal for successful closures. Eighty-three cases have been closed successfully with a goal of 80.

Region III Update – Nancy Lunden, Regional Administrator from Devils Lake

Nancy Lunden provided an update for the Devils Lake regional office. Nancy reports that they are at 65% for meeting their referral goal. They have been working short staffed for an extended period of time due to counselor turnover, difficulties filling the open positions, and staff medical leave. She does have a full staff at this time. As a result of working short staffed, she is concerned with meeting her goal for successful closures. Nancy reports that her staff has been actively involved in working with transition students and also with the transition program for individuals who are returning to the community after being incarcerated. The vision services specialist in the region has been working closely with tribal partners. Devils Lake has had many new businesses opening.

Tribal Updates

Donna Thomas, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Vocational Rehabilitation

Donna Thomas expressed concern regarding the process an individual must go through to get accommodations on the Praxis. The accommodation requirements were updated in March 2016. She reports the new requirements make it difficult for someone with a learning or psychiatric disability to receive accommodations. Donna requested regional directors, tribal directors, and state office administrators review this new process. The link for the website is <http://www.ets.org/disabilities>.

Marshall Longie, Spirit Lake Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Project

Marshall Longie provided a handout with the Spirit Lake VR Project semi-annual report. He has been working with a consultant for guidance and assistance to best serve his

clients and connect with potential clients. Marshall shared that Spirit Lake has developed a Facebook page for their program.

AdHoc Executive Committee

ND State Provisional Hiring Initiative: No updates.

AdHoc Business Awards Committee

The committee would like to receive more applications for the awards.

Recommendations from the committee include updating the application to provide examples on how to answer each question so people are more comfortable with filling out the application, and requesting the CRP's in each region to submit one application to the regional office. Each regional office will determine the regional winner which will be submitted as a nominee for the statewide award. Tribal offices are also asked to nominate businesses. The AdHoc Business Awards Committee will select the statewide winner. A member of the SRC will be involved with the presentation of the awards at the Governor's Workforce & HR Conference. SRC members are also invited to assist with the presentation of regional awards if the regional winners are not at the conference. Historically the awards were posted as public service announcements in the region specific newspapers. The committee is recommending that the regional chamber of commerce also be notified of the regional winner.

Membership/Public Relations Committee – Darcy Severson, Chair

There is currently one open business position and a second business position opening at the end of May. The subcommittee has received four applications and is currently in the process of checking references. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position will open 6/30/2016 and recruitment has started. The State Workforce Investment Board position is currently open and is in the process of being filled.

Action: A motion was made by Darcy Severson and seconded by Tim Davenport to move forward with submitting all four applicants for the business positions to the Governor's office with the recommendation of Jason Sutheimer and Susan Sisk, pending reference checks. Motion carried.

The committee is planning two town hall meetings. During the meetings businesses will have a safe zone to call and ask questions about employing individuals with disabilities. The callers will be connected with facilitators and the facilitators will bring the questions to the panelists. Potential panelists will include VR, Job Service, Chamber of Commerce, VA Rep, and past VR client. The potential dates for the meetings are October 6th for Bismarck and October 18th for Fargo. The time period for the meetings would run from 6 pm to 8 pm. Russ Cusack confirmed that DVR will provide funding for the costs associated with this.

Planning/Evaluation Committee – Kirsten Dvorak, Chair

The committee reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 16-01 Client Purchases and Policy 16-02 Client Financial Participation as well as the newly written Policy 16-03 Appeal Process.

Action: A motion was made by Marshall Longie and seconded by Joseph Hall to recommend the removal of service connected veteran's benefits from the income source considered category on Policy 16-02 Client Financial Participation and move it to an excluded category such as SSI and SSDI. Motion carried.

Action: A motion was made by Marshall Longie and seconded by Darcy Severson to accept policy 16-01, 16-02 as amended, and 16-03. Motion carried.

The committee reports that the process for completing consumer satisfaction surveys has been updated. DVR has a contract with Market Decisions. Market Decisions calls consumers asking them to verbally respond to surveys, rather than having surveys mailed out to clients. The response rate has dramatically increased and responses are more thorough as Market Decisions can ask follow-up questions based on the initial responses.

Resource Committee – Sheri Wilson & Tim Davenport, Co-Chairs

Tim Davenport reported the staff survey was implemented during the fourth quarter of 2015 and results were received by DVR in January 2016. The state office has developed a plan for addressing the concerns.

Recognizable themes from the staff survey:

- Increase recognition of VR staff at the regional level
- Enhancing teamwork in all the VR regional offices
- Educate staff regarding the need and purpose of data collection for federal program reporting
- Reduce any forms or paperwork that is unnecessary

Staff enjoy:

- A flexible work environment
- Client service and making a difference
- Autonomy
- Coworker relations

Next meeting July 21 & 22, 2016.

A motion was made by Rod Gillund and seconded by Tim Davenport to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.